

**Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning Division
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION**

**MUNICIPAL
CODE SECTIONS:**

RMC 4-2-060, Use Table, and 4-2-110A, Development Standards.

REFERENCE:

May 4, 1995 administrative determination regarding ham radio antennas (Attachment A). This 1995 determination is hereby superseded.

SUBJECT:

Permissible heights for amateur/ham radio antennas and residential zoning designations which would allow amateur/ham radio antennas in conjunction with residential uses and the process necessary to obtain approval of antennas.

BACKGROUND:

We received an inquiry regarding the appropriate zoning designations and height limitations for ham radio antennas. While this use is not specifically addressed by or listed in the City's zoning use table, the zoning code does prescribe height limits for detached and attached structures in residential zones.

According to one definition: "Amateur radio, often called ham radio, is both a hobby and a service in which participants use various types of radio communications equipment to communicate with other radio amateurs for public service, recreation and self-training. Amateur radio operators enjoy personal (and often worldwide) wireless communications with each other and are able to support their communities with emergency and disaster communications if necessary, while increasing their personal knowledge of electronics and radio theory. An estimated six million people throughout the world are regularly involved with amateur radio."

Section 4-2-050C6 of the Renton Municipal Code allows the Director to make determinations regarding the permissibility of uses not specifically listed in the zoning code--provided the use is:

- "In keeping with the purpose and intent of the zone, and consistent with the Renton Comprehensive Plan policies; and
- Similar in nature to, and no more intense than, a specifically listed permitted, conditional or accessory use; and
- Consistent with subsection C4 of this Section, if determined to be permissible as an accessory use."

JUSTIFICATION:

The use of ham radio antennas within residential districts could potentially be appropriate depending on the specific location of the property and the

height and location of the proposed antenna provided the impacts of the antenna to neighboring properties can be adequately mitigated. Because there is no ambiguity in the zoning code regarding height limits in residential zones, the height of ham radio antennas must comply with the standard limits unless a height variance is obtained.

DECISION: Ham radio antennas are potentially permissible in any residential or mixed use zone via the Administrative Conditional Use Permit process. Each application will be reviewed individually based on the antenna height and the location, and surroundings of the proposed site. In order to exceed the height limits stipulated in the zoning code, a variance would also need to be submitted and approved.

**PLANNING DIRECTOR
APPROVAL:**

C. E. "Chip" Vincent

DATE: August 20, 2009

**APPEAL
PROCESS:** To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal Code provides further information on the appeal process.

**CODE
AMENDMENTS
NEEDED TO
IMPLEMENT
DETERMINATIONS:**

RMC 4-2-060 should be amended to read as shown on the attached "Attachment B". Changes to the development standards should also be evaluated at the time the code amendment relative to the use table is made.